



# Chapter 18

## Reduction of Adverb Clauses to Modifying Adverbial Phrases

### CHAPTER SUMMARY

**OBJECTIVE:** To learn the meaning and use of adverbial phrases that modify the subject of a sentence. These phrases are primarily a feature of written English.

**APPROACH:** This chapter draws a parallel with Chapter 13, where adjective phrases are introduced. Adverb clauses and reduced adverbial phrases are illustrated and practiced with special attention to avoiding dangling modifiers.

**TERMINOLOGY:** A “dangling participle” is one type of dangling modifier.

*Unsure of himself, the right words stuck in Bob’s throat.*  
= a dangling modifier (but not a dangling participle).

*Being unsure of himself, the right words stuck in Bob’s throat* = a dangling participle that can also be called by the more inclusive term “dangling modifier.”

**CHART 18-1.** Introduction. Page 387  
Time: 10 minutes

Central to reducing adverb clauses to phrases is understanding that such reductions are only possible when the subject of the adverb clause and the subject of the main clause are one and the same.

The modifying phrases presented in this chart are often called “participial phrases” because the main word is a present participle (*-ing* form) or sometimes a past participle (*-ed* form, conveying a passive meaning). If the phrase doesn’t modify the subject of the main clause, the unacceptable result is called a “dangling participle” — the participle has nothing to modify, and so it “dangles” (hangs) unattached to any other word. For example:

*While walking by the lake, a fish jumped out of the water.*

Obviously, the fish wasn’t walking by the lake! But, in the above sentence, *walking* must refer to the fish, so the whole thing is ungrammatical (as well as unscientific and impossible).

- Explain that in order for an adverb clause to be changed to a modifying phrase, one main condition needs to be in place: The subject of the adverb clause and the main clause must be one and the same.
- On the board, write the following sentence:  
*While Dmitry was studying with his classmates in Boston, his baby was being born in Minsk.*
- Explain that the example sentence is correct, but that it cannot be reduced because it has two subjects.
- Ask student to identify the two subjects. Underline the subjects as the students call them out.
- Explain that if you try to reduce the first clause, you change the meaning of the second and render it incorrect and illogical.  
*While studying with his classmates here in Boston, Dmitry’s baby was born in Minsk.*
- Ask students what is wrong with this second sentence. They should be able to articulate that the second sentence makes it sound as though the baby was born in front of Dmitry’s classmates in Boston or that the baby was studying in Boston. Since we know the baby was being born in Minsk, the impossibility of this combination should be clear.
- Go over the rest of the chart with students.

**EXERCISE 2.** Looking at grammar.  
Page 388  
Time: 5 minutes

- Give students a chance to work through the items individually.
- Have students take turns reading each item aloud and stating whether the sentence is grammatically correct or not.
- When a sentence is not grammatically correct, encourage students to explain why. For example, with item 1, a student can say that the fire alarm was not capable of sitting at a computer, etc.

## CHART 18-2. Changing Time Clauses to Modifying Adverbial Phrases. Page 388

Time: 10 minutes

In Chart 18-2, the word *since* has a time-related meaning, not a cause-and-effect meaning. Learners are sometimes confused about this. Just tell students that sometimes two different vocabulary items have the same spelling and sound the same, such as *fall* (*autumn*) vs. *fall* (*drop down*).

Call attention to example (f) in Chart 18-2 so that students see that a phrase may either precede or follow the main clause. Note the punctuation.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Ask students to recall what main condition must be met in order to reduce an adverbial clause to a modifying adverbial phrase. They should be able to tell you that the subject of the adverb clause and that of the main clause must be the same. Write on the board:  
*To change adverb clause to a modifying adverbial phrase:*  
*subject of the main clause = the subject of the adverb clause*
- Using students' lives, co-create sentences which have the same subject in the adverb clause as in the main clause, and write these on the board. Ask students to make the adverb clauses about timed or sequenced events and base them on real events. For example:  
*Since she came to the United States, Inez has kept up regular email correspondence with her family in Colombia.*  
*After Mikhail takes the TOEFL, he will apply to graduate school.*  
*While Birgitt has been studying here in New York, she has also been taking yoga classes.*
- Now ask various students to go to the board to change the adverb time clauses to modifying adverbial phrases.
- The class can correct these transformations as a whole. For example:  
*coming*  
*Since ~~she came~~ to the United States, Inez has kept up regular email correspondence with her family in Colombia.*
- Go over the chart as a class.

## EXERCISE 3. Looking at grammar. Page 388

Time: 5–10 minutes

You can use the first few items in this exercise to reinforce the contents of Chart 18-2. Then turn the remainder of the exercise over to group work, encouraging students to teach each other as they correct each item.

## EXERCISE 4. Let's talk: interview. Page 389

Time: 5–10 minutes

- Write a sample question on the board and model it with a third person answer. For example:  
Question: *What do you do before going to bed?*  
Answer: *I read for at least half an hour.*  
Reported answer: *Before going to bed, (Martha) reads for at least half an hour.*
- Give students ample time to interview one another and collect complete-sentence answers.
- Have students report what they have learned to the rest of the class, either orally or by writing it on the board.

**Expansion:** After students have had practice with interview questions, put them in groups and ask them to come up with some questions of a more philosophical nature. Have them use the same time words (e.g., *before, after, while*). Elicit reduced adverbial time phrases, but instruct students to try to “dig deeper” with their questions. Some sample questions you may want to write on the board include:

*What is it important for you to do before dying?*  
*Why do people often have regrets when facing the end of their lives?*  
*What can a person do to avoid feeling regretful when facing the end of his/her life?*  
*What do you think everyone should experience before getting married?*  
*If you are going anywhere in the world, what do you absolutely have to do before leaving home?*  
*When do you judge how valuable a learning experience or challenge is to you — before starting it, while facing it, or when reflecting on it?*

Once they have come up with three to six questions as a group, have students write them down on an index card. Then have them pass the index card to another group so that each group is actually asking fresh and new questions. You can give the class 10–15 minutes to obtain new information about their classmates' ideas and plans before coming back together to review what they have learned as a class.

## CHART 18-3. Expressing the Idea of “During the Same Time” in Modifying Adverbial Phrases. Page 389

Time: 5–10 minutes

Compare using modifying participial phrases at the beginning of a sentence with using gerund subjects (sometimes a point of confusion for learners). Be sure to give students some examples of gerunds as subjects.

**Walking** that street alone at night **is** dangerous.

**Hiking** through the woods **is** an enjoyable way to get exercise.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Leave the room and reenter, discussing the target grammar as you do so. When you get to the board, write:

*Entering the room, I described the use of modifying adverbial phrases.*

- Explain that because you were both “entering the room” and “describing modifying adverbial phrases” at the same time, just the gerund phrase can be used at the beginning of the sentence when the subject is clear.
- Now ask students to create sentences about one another, and write these on the board. For example:

*Clicking his pen, Antonio concentrated on the new grammar structure.*

*Sighing, Amalia listened to the explanation.*

*Smiling, Franz asked Emile if he could borrow a piece of paper.*

**CHART 18-4.** Expressing Cause and Effect in Modifying Adverbial Phrases. Page 390  
Time: 10 minutes

The important point for learners to understand is that the grammatical structure itself (without function words) expresses a cause-and-effect meaning. In many cases, an initial modifying participial phrase combines the ideas of “during the same time” and “because” — as students will discover in Exercise 6.

To illustrate that *being* expresses cause-and-effect in this structure, have the students compare the meanings of the following two sentences:

1. *Chicago, a large city, has a crime problem.*

(*a large city* = an appositive, reduced adjective clause that gives identifying information about the noun: *Chicago, which is a large city, has . . .*)

A cause-and-effect relationship may be implied, but it is not stated.

2. *Chicago, being a large city, has a crime problem.*

The use of *being* shows a clear cause-and-effect relationship.

- Write the chart title on the board, and explain that Charts 18-3 and 18-4 are being presented together because the difference in usage is not always distinguishable.
- Explain that the *-ing* phrase at the beginning of a sentence can show a cause-and-effect relationship.
- Demonstrate this by describing an observable student action and writing a *because*-clause sentence on the board. For example:

*Because Xavier was hungry, he went to the cafeteria for lunch.*

- Then illustrate how the sentence can be reduced as follows:

*Being hungry, Xavier went to the cafeteria for lunch.*

- Next, explain that to change the tense of the above sentence to the past, you reduce it by using **having + past participle**. Write the steps on the board, starting again with the *because*-clause.

*Because Tina has eaten at the cafeteria before, she doesn't want to eat there again.*

*Having eaten at the cafeteria before, Tina doesn't want to eat there again.*

*Having eaten at the cafeteria before, Tina didn't want to eat there again.*

- Review the rest of the chart with students.

#### □ EXERCISE 6. Looking at grammar.

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Time: 10 minutes

- Give students time to answer the questions on their own.
- Put students in pairs or small groups to discuss their answers. Encourage them to refer back to the explanations offered in the chart as much as possible.
- Review as a class, writing problem sentences up on the board for visual reference.
- Remind the class that very often the distinction between simultaneous action and cause-and-effect is not completely obvious.

#### Optional Vocabulary

widow  
wander  
dreadful

#### □ EXERCISE 7. Looking at grammar.

Page 390

Time: 5–10 minutes

This exercise emphasizes that the modifying phrases convey a cause-and-effect meaning without the word *because*.

- In the example, call attention to the structure of the negative phrase and to the necessity of identifying the subject in the main clause.
- Point out that these phrases modify the subject of the main clause.
- Have students make the changes independently.
- Ask different students to write the new sentences (with modifying adverbial phrases) on the board.
- Review as a class, discussing any sentences in which the meaning of the adverbial phrase is not completely clear.

### □ EXERCISE 8. Looking at grammar.

Page 391

Time: 10 minutes

This exercise is a summary of Charts 18-2, 18-3, and 18-4.

- Before starting the exercise, point out that the phrases in these three charts modify the subject of the main clause. Be prepared to repeat this as often as needed.
- Depending on your class, either give students time to complete the exercise individually or have students complete the items on sight by taking turns reading each item aloud and choosing the possible completions.
- Ask students to justify their answers and be able to articulate “why not” regarding the choices that are not possible completions.

#### Optional Vocabulary

formula            gaining            popped (ears)  
terrain            union leader

### □ EXERCISE 9. Looking at grammar.

Page 391

Time: 5–10 minutes

In this exercise, the students have to make modifying phrases while being careful to avoid dangling participles. Strongly emphasize that such phrases modify the subject of the main clause.

- Have students work independently or in pairs to combine each pair of sentences correctly.
- Review as a class, discussing the implied meanings of the adverbial phrases *because*, *while*, and a blending of the two.

### □ EXERCISE 10. Game. Page 392

Time: 10–15 minutes

**Expansion:** Prepare index cards that contain two parts of a complex sentence. The first part should be a correctly formed modifying phrase, and the second part should be the main sentence. Hand out all the index cards, and have students find their “match” by discussing possible combinations with their classmates.

### CHART 18-5. Using *Upon + -ing* in Modifying Adverbial Phrases. Page 393

Time: 5–10 minutes

These phrases are more common in formal writing than in ordinary conversation.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Explain that the structure students are learning is not common in speech and they are unlikely to encounter it outside of written texts.
- Ask students for some examples of age-related, rite-of-passage events common in their countries, and write sentences with *when*-clauses that can be changed to *upon + -ing* appropriately. For example:

*When Mexican girls turn fifteen, they are given a special party called a “quinceañera.”*

*When French boys turn eighteen, they have to serve in the military for two years.*

- You can also offer a few examples of your own: getting a driver’s license, registering to vote, etc. (These examples are useful because they also suggest an appropriate level of formality.) For example:

*When Jeff became eighteen, he registered to vote.*

*When Anita turned sixteen, she got her driver’s license.*

- Write the *when*-clause sentences on the board before transforming them to *upon/on + -ing* adverbial phrases. Underline the target grammar.

*When Mexican girls turn fifteen, they are given a special party called a “quinceañera.”*

*Upon turning fifteen, Mexican girls are given a special party called a “quinceañera.”*

*When Anita turned sixteen, she got her driver’s license.*

*On turning sixteen, Anita got her driver’s license.*

- Go over the chart as a class.

### □ EXERCISES 14–18. Pages 394–396

These five exercises review the entire chapter by practicing the four major skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

### □ EXERCISE 15. Let’s talk. Page 394

Time: 10–15 minutes

- Put students into groups.
- Ask students to be as creative, specific, and comprehensive as possible in making suggestions.
- Circulate while helping students to come up with ideas for the main clause of each sentence. Correct form and usage as necessary.
- Assign each group an item, and have them write on the board all possibilities they came up with.
- Use this process as a springboard for a class discussion of sound vs. unsound advice.

**EXERCISE 17.** Reading and grammar.

Page 395

Time: 10–15 minutes

**Part I**

- In addition to underlining the modifying adverbial phrases, have students identify which noun each phrase refers to.
- Ask students to take turns reading the passage aloud so that they can hear themselves pronounce the target structures.

**Part II**

- Have different students read items 1–4 aloud and other students give their answers in order to involve everyone in the review.
- Ask students to be ready to cite the part of the passage which contains the True or False answer.

**Optional Vocabulary**

latest attempt

acid

rushed

revolutionary

practical application

**Expansion for Optional Vocabulary**

Have students close their books after completing Exercise 17. Write the optional vocabulary items on the board. Have students explain the meaning of each by referring (without opening their books) to the context of the passage. Since the vocabulary items are listed in chronological order, it should be easy to adapt this activity to text recall.